



Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) for the OPEN Energy Program

Description: The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) occasionally receives proposals for energy projects and initiatives outside of the agency's suite of established technology and sector specific energy programs in a given fiscal year. MEA acknowledges that these types of proposals can potentially help advance the state's energy goals in innovative ways while also being responsive to evolving energy issues and engaging a broad range of stakeholders. MEA's OPEN Energy Program (OPEN Energy) provides an avenue for the agency to consider these proposals for funding.

Submission Deadline: There is no deadline by which an open-ended proposal must be submitted to MEA. However, applications should be submitted no later than May 15, 2022 to be considered for FY22 funding.

Funding: A total of \$1,000,000 is anticipated to be available in FY22; however, the total amount awarded under the program may be more or less depending on the quantity and quality of applications received. Typically awards will be up to \$300,000; however, larger awards are possible for especially impactful efforts.

Review of a proposal submitted in response to an OPEN Energy FOA is not a guarantee of funding.

Eligible Applicants: Businesses, nonprofit organizations, local governments, state government and educational institutions. Other restrictions may apply on a case-by-case basis.

Eligible Activities: A proposal may include capital projects, technical assistance, and other activities that align with the evaluation criteria specified in this FOA. In certain compelling cases, studies or strategy development will be considered.

Evaluation Criteria: A proposal must be consistent with MEA's mission and the limitations on use of the Strategic Energy Investment Fund, directly benefit the state, and address one or more of the following:

- energy efficiency;
- Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard;
- electric vehicle adoption and electric vehicle infrastructure deployment;
- greenhouse gas emission reductions; and,

- any other relevant state statutory law or policy.

Specifically, the evaluation will consider:

- Potential of the proposal to contribute to MEA's mission in a positive manner;
- Uniqueness or innovativeness of the proposal;
- Type and magnitude of public benefit, including energy-related benefits;
- Potential replicability,;
- Likelihood of the project to be completed and provide a verifiable public benefit;
- Technical and financial feasibility; and,
- Other criteria deemed consistent with state or agency priorities.

For FY22, MEA will provide additional consideration to proposals that address one or more of the non-energy benefits below, when a project combines these non-energy benefits with an energy benefit:

- Resiliency
- Job creation
- Innovation
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Environmental justice

Submissions will also be evaluated based on the reasonability of the proposal, from both a technical and financial perspective, by a review team of subject experts selected by MEA.

Submission Process- Format:

The initial proposal submission to MEA should consist of 1) the OPEN Energy Application Form and 2) a concept paper that will enable the MEA review team to assess potential eligibility and interest by MEA.

The concept paper submitted to MEA shall be no more than 10 pages. The concept paper should include at a minimum the following information:

- the name and address of the entity submitting the proposal.
- a description of the organization submitting the proposal.
- the name of the point of contact for the proposal, along with contact information.
- the date of submission.
- a description of the proposed project.
- anticipated benefits of the proposed project and how these benefits relate to the state's energy goals.
- requested funding amount.
- project partners (if applicable); and,
- matching funds (if applicable).

If deemed necessary by MEA, MEA may request an expanded version of the proposal or additional information and documentation. A request for additional information may include a follow-up meeting with the applicant.

No sensitive or otherwise confidential information shall be disclosed to MEA in an OPEN Energy proposal without prior approval. If sensitive or confidential information must be provided to MEA, the submitter of the proposal shall first contact MEA to determine the most secure way to transmit this information.

Notice: All information submitted in an OPEN Energy proposal is subject to the Maryland Public Information Act (PIA). If the submitter of the proposal believes information in the proposal is confidential and therefore should be exempt from disclosure under the PIA, the submitter shall clearly mark this information and identify it by page and section or line number. Upon request for information from a third party, MEA is required to make an independent determination whether the information must be disclosed under the PIA. Designating information as confidential does not guarantee that it will be exempt from disclosure.

Submission Process- Method:

An application to OPEN Energy shall be submitted to the following MEA email address: OPEN.MEA@maryland.gov. To aid in identification, the subject matter for the email should be “OPEN Energy Program: [Project Description]”.

Grant Program General Provisions: MEA grant programs are covered by general requirements (“General Provisions”) that will be made part of the grant agreement between MEA and a grantee. The General Provisions are available for review on [MEA's website](#)¹. For FY22, the [General Provisions Version 3.0](#) will be incorporated into all MEA FY22 grant agreements.

Other Program Provisions:

In addition to the general provisions, the following funding qualifications apply to this program:

- MEA at its discretion may fund some, all, or no proposals received through an OPEN Energy FOA in a given fiscal year. Additionally, as an OPEN Energy FOA proposal may reduce the amount of funding available for future energy programs, MEA may decide not to fund an application that appears to have merit under the evaluation criteria review.
- MEA may determine, at its discretion, that a proposal has merit and develop a future year competitive or publicly advertised program to address the proposed need instead of funding a specific proposal through the OPEN Energy Program.

¹ <https://energy.maryland.gov/Pages/all-incentives.aspx>

- Any proposal submitted for consideration by MEA through OPEN Energy must be permissible within MEA's established resources in a given fiscal year and conform to the allowable uses of the SEIF.²
- Proposals that overlap with existing MEA programs will not be funded.
- Based on the evaluation criteria and funding availability, MEA may consider a smaller component of an OPEN Energy proposal.
- MEA will not consider a proposal submitted through OPEN Energy if the proposal might be eligible for funding, and therefore could have been submitted, under any of MEA's other active programs. For example, MEA will not consider a proposal that might be eligible for funding under an active program but for a failure to submit a timely application or a failure to fit within funding limitations of the program.

Questions can be directed to Garry Aime, Program Manager at Garry.aime@Maryland.gov 443-306-8149.

² Or any additional funding sources that may arise in the future.